HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSULTATION

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
LOCATION:	Furnace Lakes, Guildford Road, Slinfold
DESCRIPTION:	Removal of 9 No. fishing swims and the siting of 3 shepherds huts for use as holiday accommodation together with associated works
REFERENCE:	DC-24-1959
RECOMMENDATION:	Advice / Objection / Refusal

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION:

I recommend that the application be withdrawn or refused as appropriate on grounds of direct loss of a section of Ancient woodland (AW), from the physical change associated with the pre-emptive extent of groundworks and the associated future pressures associated with the proposed recreational usage, contrary to the NPPF guidance.

I recommend that the development be-relocated as appropriate in planning terms to a less landscape sensitive area of the site and the AW be left to re-colonise with indigenous species.

MAIN COMMENTS:

The application site forms part of the Western edge of Furnacehouse Copse/Roman Woods Ancient Woodland (AW) where it abuts the bank of Furnace Lake.

The wood forms a part of the relatively large Furnace Wood that has good tree'd landscape connectivity W towards Rudgwick and N and E to Rowhook and further towards Okewood Hill.

The soil is the predominating Low Weald clay with woodland species typical of NVC classification W10 dominated by pedunculate oak with significant quantities of formerly worked hornbeam and hazel with occasional Wild service. Ground flora is diverse in places, dependant on localised historic management and usage (or recent lack of).

It is apparent from available imagery that the development area has been denuded of all woodland understorey vegetation and the majority of the woodland trees over the course of approximately the last decade. Some recent planting of ornamental species has occurred as part of the urbanisation of the site.

Pre-emptive denudation of AW is not a sound reason for permitting subsequent.development. The land remains subject of AW designation until such time as Natural England deem otherwise. Provided underlying soils have not been destroyed, the woodland could likely re-colonise given time.
ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A

NAME:	ANDY CLOUT – ASST. ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER
DEPARTMENT:	STRATEGIC PLANNING - SPECIALISTS
DATE:	12/03/25